



March 14, 2012

Senator Judy K. Emmons, Chairwoman
Committee on Families, Seniors, and Human Services
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Dear Chairwoman Emmons and Distinguished Committee Members,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Senate Bill 884, recently introduced by Senator Goeff Hansen (R-34th District).

As a Michigan-licensed Nursing Home Administrator since 1991, I am familiar with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services federal participation requirements for skilled nursing facilities, particularly as they are administered in Michigan by the LARA Bureau of Health Systems (BHS).

The ability of the BHS to execute its responsibilities in this regard carries significant impact throughout the State. Please consider that nursing home services are provided in over 425 Michigan facilities, which are an integral part of nearly every community. In myriad ways, the quality, fairness, and outcomes associated with the nursing home survey process pervasively and significantly impact tens of thousands of Michigan nursing home residents/patients, employees, and their families.

Unlike nearly every other state nursing home survey agency, the BHS' structure and methods promulgate surveyor focus onto potential commission of crimes and an exceedingly fear-based oversight of the provider community. This is both redundant and has created untold negative ramifications through the years. Their repeatedly stated mission, manifested in both words and deeds, is focused on "enforcement." Such frequently seems to run counter to the intent of the federal regulations toward the facilitation of ever-improved quality. For many years, Michigan has been presented as highly deficient in that regard. From my experience, it is simply not true.

Through the leadership of Senator Hansen, Senate Bill 884 is a very positive step forward toward again addressing a very long-standing problem. It is my belief that this bill aims to ensure that the BHS simply conforms to existing rules and demands transparency and fairness throughout the nursing home survey process.

I urge you to pass Senate Bill 884. It aims, through available means, to improve our healthcare environment, begins to replace fear with pride, and will ultimately improve the services being provided to our residents and families.

Thank you for your consideration.

Most Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gary P. Davis".
Gary P. Davis
Administrator

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